

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to add the limitation of claim 4 and now recites a support structure that has a layer of silicone material on its side facing away from the silicone membrane, the layer forming an abutment that interacts with corresponding stop surfaces on actuation tappets. Further, claim 1 has been amended to delete the language of "especially for a vehicle steering wheel." Accordingly, claim 1 is allowable as are claims 2, 3 and 5-8 dependent from claim 1.

New claim 9 has been added by this amendment. It is respectfully submitted that claim 9 is patentable over the art of record, taken individually or in combination. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests allowance of claim 9.

Claim 9 recites a shared switch housing in which actuation tappets for pushbutton switching units are movably guided, and a cap mounted over the actuation tappets and onto the switch housing, said cap being made by means of a two-component injection-molding technique and comprising a relatively rigid plastic frame with recessed windows each of a shape and size that corresponds to the circumference of one of the pushbutton surfaces and of a silicone membrane extending over the recessed windows, and said plastic frame and said silicone membrane are joined with an inter-material bond.

U.S. 4,638,131 to Kidd, et. al. ("Kidd") in view of G.B. 2,353,767 to Benjamin Rush ("Rush") do not disclose a plastic frame and a silicone membrane joined with an inter-

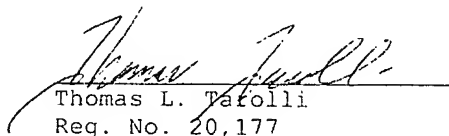
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material bond as recited in claim 9. Neither Kidd nor Rush disclose a frame and membrane made of different materials as recited in claim 9. Thus, neither reference discloses the inter-material bond of plastic and silicone recited in claim 9. Further, since neither reference discloses the invention of claim 9, a combination of the references does not make claim 9 obvious.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance and allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


Thomas L. Tarolli
Reg. No. 20,177

TAROLLI, SUNDHEIM, COVELL,
& TUMMINO L.L.P.
526 Superior Avenue, Suite 1111
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-1400
Phone: (216) 621-2234
Fax: (216) 621-4072
Customer No.: 26,294

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